

AUGUST 1, 1980

CONFERENCES


Thames and Hudson

By W. W. Robson

Prelude is not "straight" autobiography—if there is such a thing—we learned from Proust that the distinction between memory and

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Peter

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"magic" I mean what is ultimate and unanalysable.) M. H. Abrams says that *The Prelude* has an unexpected affinity with *Don Juan* in being

Bang it back down on the thundery steel tabl

Pete

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Defensively minded

By Randall Rogers

A. W. LAWRENCE:

Greek Aims in Fortification
483pp. 97 plates. Clarendon Press:
Oxford University Press. £35.
0 19 514824 0

Secure fortifications were military and political necessities for the city states, leagues and empires of the Greek world. Their importance is underscored by their ruins, which have interested successive generations of archaeologists, historians, and tourists. Moreover, the degree to which the Greeks may have perished in the early stages of Greek history, in which an indelible primitive style gradually assimilated traditions from western Asia and developed into a recognizably "Greek" style by the end of the fifth century B.C. The invention of Greek military science in the early fourth century, and the mechanical orientation of besiegers, provided strong impetus towards defensive refinement and innovation. Lawrence is keen to draw on the work of E. W. Marston and Yvon Garlan on Greek poliorrhesis, and concentrates on the architectural responses to these new developments in the art of siege warfare.

Greek Aims in Fortification seeks to explain why Greek fortifications took the form they did when they did, and so focuses on specific geographical positions rather than on the fortifications of a particular state or campaign. Yet the book is not merely a collection of site monographs, because Professor Lawrence relates recent archaeological work to historical traditions of sieges and to Greek traditions of offensive and defensive siege warfare.

The core of the work is a typology of the forms of fortification: urban defences, outworks, country forts and towers, "long walls" guarding an area between city and port, and artillery platforms. Accompanying this is a detailed description of the components of Greek fortification—towers,

curtain-walls, gates, embasures, windows, arrow-slits, and the brickwork and masonry involved in construction. By identifying innovations in the employment and design of these, Lawrence demonstrates the development of Greek military architecture. A section on building techniques is particularly informative, and much helped by the illustrations—indeed, the printer is to be congratulated on the reproductions of the author's own drawings and pictures.

Lawrence's central theme is that the characteristic features of Greek military architecture were primarily developed as responses to the increased technical capabilities of besiegers. He begins by outlining the early stages of Greek fortification, in which an indelible primitive style gradually assimilated traditions from western Asia and developed into a recognizably "Greek" style by the end of the fifth century B.C. The invention of Greek military science in the early fourth century, and the mechanical orientation of besiegers, provided strong impetus towards defensive refinement and innovation. Lawrence is keen to draw on the work of E. W. Marston and Yvon Garlan on Greek poliorrhesis, and concentrates on the architectural responses to these new developments in the art of siege warfare.

In an attempt to speed up the process of reducing positions by blockade, besiegers employed the traditions of Near-Eastern means of attacking walls with rams and armoured roofs, undermining mounds, and infantry assaults. The Greeks themselves added two new weapons to the armoury: artillery and the well-dominating mobile siege-tower. While Greek artillery was primarily an anti-personnel weapon at its invention in 393 B.C. it became more and more powerful and by the end of the fourth century was capable of seriously

damaging fortifications. The Assyrians had earlier employed large armoured roofs and firing platforms for archers, but the Greek siege-tower over-topped the fortifications it was attacking, enabling the artillery mounted on it to dominate the walls and permitting an easy and relatively safe escape for assault troops.

These various means of attack compelled fortress designers to incorporate counter-measures. Mud-brick was abandoned for stone in wall construction not so much to resist such attack, but to prevent troops labouring under the cover of an armoured roof from simply cutting through the walls. Gates and the lower sections of walls became stronger to resist rams, and towers became larger in order to force attackers to build taller, hence more vulnerable siege-towers.

Artillery had the greatest impact on fortification, not only because of the threat it presented, but because of its defensive capabilities. In order to accommodate the artillery necessary to harass attacking men and machines, towers were given larger apertures and doorways. They were built within supporting distance of each other, and the field of fire tended to become rounded or polygonal, and towers were built more massively, and stone blocks designed in such a way as to project slightly beyond

the weaker joints connecting them, so reducing artillery damage. However, the best defence was understood to be a good counter-attack, and so small, mobile siege-towers were built into walls, permitting the easy egress and return of assault parties, whose task was to destroy the besieging machinery so difficult to support when operating close to fortifications.

An important source for Lawrence's work is the *Poliorrhika*, a treatise on offensive and defensive siege warfare written by Philo of Byzantium. Lawrence dates this to the 240s A.D. and sees it as the lone survivor of a whole corpus of Greek writings on siege warfare. The treatise is a combination of general precepts and precise instructions, and presents a fascinating glimpse into the world of Greek military engineers, as well as a guide to Greek siege warfare. Lawrence provides the first translation of the *Poliorrhika* into English, and establishes the links between Philo's theory and Greek practice.

While this book will be valuable as a reference work for ancient historians, it is also a significant contribution to the history of fortification. Whatever one's view about Lawrence's conclusions, his organization and presentation of the evidence is masterful. His understanding of fortification and its present-day comparisons with other ages. The development of fortification in twelfth and thirteenth-century Europe and the Levant offers interesting parallels with the increasing sophistication of besiegers prompted by the refinements and innovations in Greek patterns. However, medieval siege warfare, even in the age of gunpowder, and the development of the incendiary devices employed to Greek and medieval defences remain to be uncovered. The engineers and artillery experts of the Middle Ages, but none of them such as Philo.

Perhaps the most interesting of the differences between the Greek and the later period concerns the use of Greek artillery. It was relatively standardized, and primarily became the destructive potential of the artillery at an early date. Philo could know the capabilities of the artillery which would be brought against him, and he accordingly.

Medieval artillery was of a completely different type, and European engineers were only beginning to develop its potential at the end of the twelfth century, when the diffusion of knowledge was particularly esoteric. It was never as even as it was in the Greek world. However, the technical sophistication in the ages made the engineer an important figure in the wider society, and the development of defensive siege warfare, and developments in military engineering continually drove up the cost of war and of defence.

the divergence of actual behaviour on the field of battle from literary prescription, which is of an archaic character and derives in part from alien, sometimes Byzantine, originals. J. D. Latham and W. Patterson describe the technique of the Muslim horse-archer, basing themselves mainly on the fifteenth-century text which they have previously edited and translated as *Saracenic Archery*. A substantial and closely argued piece by Michael J. G. Cantor, drawing on the work of the Near East and Middle East from the eighth to the fifteenth century as shown in works of art.

The bulk of the contributions are concerned with extant examples of Islamic arms and armour. They bring to mind the extraordinary range of examples in what has been preserved. From the earlier centuries some of the most striking are the sword and scabbard, and still in Istanbul are illustrated by A. Zaky. Among them are the sword and scabbard of the Prophet Muhammad, his general Khalid bin Walid, and the 'Abbasid caliphs. According to the inventories they were accepted as genuine in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In our present state of knowledge we can only say that the sword and scabbard of the thirteenth-century Caliph al-Buhārī, al-Buhārī may be contemporary with the blades.

The decoration of a few weapons gives them a strong claim to be fourteenth or fifteenth-century. Among these are a group of Mamluk axes surveyed in this volume by Helmut Nickel. By contrast, tens of thousands of examples of Islamic arms and armour scattered through the public and private collections of the world must be assigned a date between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. During this period, until the eighteenth century, the central Islamic world was a conglomeration of great states, Ottoman Turkey, Safavid Iran, Mughal India and others. Among these were the Mamluks of Egypt, the Ilkhanids of Persia, and the Timurids of Central Asia. Arms and armour were esteemed by the élites and their value in maintaining command of the field was not only for its claims to power but also for its craftsmanship and lavish and expensive ornamentation.

At the peripheries of these Muslim empires such weaponry was equally coveted by the material Christian noblemen of India and by the Polish and the Holy Roman Empire. Two articles in this volume, one by A. Zaky and the other by A. S. Metkalf-Chirwall, are on the Persian seventeenth-century arms and armour. The latter is a collection of the arms and armour of the Mughal emperors, and the former is a collection of the arms and armour of the Persian emperors.

The presence of the powderhorn at Cracow, taken as booty after the siege of Vienna, draws attention to the problems of provenance and the problems of the Near East and Middle East from the eighth to the fifteenth century as shown in works of art.

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The ironies of incarceration

By Terence Morris

MARVIN E. WOLFGANG (Editor):
Prisons: Present and Possible
243pp. Harth. £11.
0 669 01674 8

The prison, the "black flower of civilized society" as Nathaniel Hawthorne once called it, has become a hardy perennial among our social institutions. Since the ending of wholesale capital punishment it has become the primary mode of punishment for crime, to which all other sanctions are functionally related. It stands as the ultimate deterrent behind all lesser sanctions, and in our social mythology. Standing gaunt and usually blackened in the least salubrious districts of the inner city, the high walls of the maximum security prison represent not merely the reality, but the symbolic manifestation of the power of the state over lawbreakers, current and to come.

Incarceration, then, has a meaning not merely for those behind the prison wall, but for those outside. To the potential offender it is supposed to represent some other deterrent, and in the wider society it offers some tangible token of the capacity of society to protect him and his goods from the depredations of crime. It is assumed that liability to suffer imprisonment will fall equally upon any citizen who has offended against the law, irrespective of age, sex, social condition, race, religion or any other consideration, and that having so fallen, the inmate will not be subject to any discrimination by reason of those factors while serving his sentence.

The realities of imprisonment are somewhat different. Stolidly over this century it has been shown that liability to suffer imprisonment may vary with the sex of the offender, with age, with social standing and with ethnic status. Neither the inmate himself nor the wider society is immune from the effects of incarceration, nor the extent of any violence that may be present, is a criterion automatically taken into account.

Serious questions have been raised about the effectiveness of incarceration as a rehabilitative device, to the extent that the expression "the collapse of the rehabilitative ideal" is now a commonplace in the vocabulary of penologists on both sides of the Atlantic. More than that, it is widely believed that penal institutions are likely to perform the function of universities at crime in the short term and to be a source of living death, whose personalities have undergone drastic change, in the long. Expensive and largely ineffectual as devices for change, they represent poor value as a means of protecting society since the small proportion of crimes are actually cleared up. In that they both damage and degrade, and do so with a degree of social selectivity which cannot be related to any unequal social distribution of crime, they constitute a challenge to the conscience of all free democracies.

The bitter irony is that the modern prison, or "penitentiary" to give it the name it was born with in the Age of Enlightenment, was devised to provide a constructive, humane, liberal alternative to the barbarous physical punishments of the ancient régime which had, if anything, grown worse since the end of the Middle Ages.

While prison problems have manifested themselves, with unusual violence at times, in Britain, France and Italy, nowhere in the Western world is the problem more acute than in the contemporary United States. Redeviled by the complexities of administrative systems that are often worm-eaten by political intrigue and by corruption, plagued by violence and chaos, inmates themselves who seem to have added homosexual rape to the repertoire of commonplace violence, and by guards against inmates, the prison system of the United States is arguably in a far worse state than that which would befall the United States if it were a member of the Pennsylvanian Prison Society in the 1780s. It is overcrowded and largely worn out, and certainly not up to meeting the "dreadful" imposed both by the crime rates and by the social and political demands for a response to the public demands for imprisonment to be used as a form

of social incapacitation in a programme to re-establish "Law and Order" in American cities.

For all the structural, administrative and political differences between the two countries, we in Britain neglect the lessons to be learnt from North America at our peril. Just as our city planners and developers could, by looking at the dying inner city in America, have had some inkling of the fate facing some British cities, so, too, those in this country who see a prison-building programme as being somehow a solution to our penal problems might look at what has been happening there.

Murvin Wolfgang, one of America's most accomplished and energetic criminologists, has edited a book which ought to be on the shelves of any who claim a voice in our own penal debate. For although there are many points of difference between the criminal justice systems of this country and its legally more complex manifestations across the Atlantic, the debate has common features—overcrowding in many, the ineffectiveness of incarceration, social inequalities in the distribution of types of sentence, the amount of right-wing politics, an effective and politically acceptable means of dealing with rising crime levels. Rather as the old pro-hang-carry law used to argue that the dead killer never killed again, the "incapacitation" school believes that by putting persistent offenders out of circulation, the crime rate is reduced. Erlich's work on capital punishment was widely cited during the 1960s, and the popularity was undeniable. Martinson's argument is that while restraint is severely limited in its effectiveness, deterrence is not. He

Among the more interesting contributions to the book is that of Thomas Murton, who combines the distinction, unknown in this country, of having and never in the correctional field, in which he has had at times to cope with the

consequences of mismanagement, with making a serious contribution to academic penology. His discussion of the potential advantages of a system in which prison sentences would no longer be the exclusive preserve of the state is not without interest; his suggestions for a "contract" system are not unlike those put forward by Jeremy Bentham, who wished to use his famous Panopticon as a mill for the reformation of the state's most industrious. If it is thought unthinkable here, we should remember that private security organizations are already in the business of guarding people detained in the course of immigration procedures—a task traditionally performed by the prison service. Things will have to become a great deal worse in this country before the conditions which Murton regards as characteristic of a state penal system are to be put in place on the political agenda; but his ideas are far from crazy.

Robert Martinson's essay on "Restraint and Incapacitation" illustrates some of the shortcomings of the better, now growing in popularity, right-wing politics. It is both an effective and politically acceptable means of dealing with rising crime levels. Rather as the old pro-hang-carry law used to argue that the dead killer never killed again, the "incapacitation" school believes that by putting persistent offenders out of circulation, the crime rate is reduced. Erlich's work on capital punishment was widely cited during the 1960s, and the popularity was undeniable. Martinson's argument is that while restraint is severely limited in its effectiveness, deterrence is not. He

Much of the difficulty that bedevils attempts to make sentencing policy both rational, in the sense of being oriented towards the achievement of some sensible and practical objectives, and democratic, is the necessity for some compromise between what is desirable, stems from the problems of communication between the polity as a whole and the judiciary. Blumstein and Nagin's suggestion of a "penal ladder" is an attempt to bring sentencing levels to prevailing needs and conditions, is initially an attractive one. It has, of course, a distinct similarity to our own Advisory Council on the Penal

System, now a miserably dead quagmire, decapitated by the Thatcher axe.

A somewhat unusual but welcome feature of this book is an epilogue, written by Gilbert Geis, in which the contributions of the various authors are usefully assessed. Geis draws attention to a theme which Winston Churchill is credited with having developed during his tenure as Liberal Home Secretary: the notion that the penal policy adopted by a society is a telling indication of the integrity of that society itself. Quoting Sir John Barry, the great scholar Chief Justice of the Australian state of Victoria, Geis notes that "it should be the objective of civilized and progressive society . . . to devise methods of punishment which do not deny the human qualities of the offender, because a denial of his humanity draws with it a denial of society itself."

This is perhaps the great issue of penology in the West. It is easy for the prisons of the Soviet empire to deny the humanity of their hapless inmates, since that humanity is largely reduced to the despised character of a bourgeois myth. It is easy for the *kadi* justice dispensed by the backward-looking ayatollahs to deal death and dishonour in a frenzy of avenging fervour. For all its faults, Western society cannot escape its own irreversible legacy of political thought, a line that runs from Voltaire and Rousseau, through Bentham and Tocqueville, to deal death and dishonour as a cardinal issue in political life. It is encouraging to know that, to enlarge Canning's dictum, the New World which came in to redress the balance of penal practice in the Old, is still in the need for radical thought and change.

The American way of birth

By Sheila Kitzinger

DIANA SCULLY:
Men Who Control Women's Health
285pp. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$10.95.
0 395 29137 2

Doctors are usually men. In the United States 93 per cent of them are male, whereas 93 per cent of the population are female. The field of obstetrics and gynaecology has an even smaller proportion of women, only 3.5 per cent. Obstetricians gaily at the eyes of their colleagues by doing surgery, and catching women's ailments in treated as an expendable organ and hysterectomy as the most often performed operation in the United States.

Men Who Control Women's Health is a fascinating sociological study of the training of "doctors" in two Boston hospitals. Diana Scully first examines theories about women's psychology which pervade the medical literature. Women have, for example, a pre-menstrual phase in which "an oppressive, cyclic cloud . . . stops them functioning in a logical, male fashion" according to a pronouncement in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, and a fairly recent textbook states that a wife "should make herself available" for the fulfilment of her husband's sexual drive.

In interviews with residents (in Britain, registrars) she found that they expressed strong preferences for the middle-class patient who was passive and easily submissive. "The main thing," said one respondent, "is that she understands what I say, listens to what I say, does what I say, believes what I say." Linked with this expectation of patients behaving like happy, obedient children is a denial of the reality of mourning in women who are losing their reproductive organs, of depression often associated with childbirth, and the grief experienced by parents after the death of a baby.

Gynaecologists, on the whole, learn little or nothing about sexuality in their training and have to pick it up as they go along. In interviews they see their main qualities as "medical judgment" and "surgical skill." "You know

what you are doing, you take it out, and the patient gets better." In spite of this they are the official guardians of women's health in the United States, and are fast becoming an anachronism in a society where women are to be specially knowledgeable and understanding concerning sexual emotions.

Scully examined textbooks and found that they reinforced traditional male-female sex role stereotypes and that gynaecologists tend to be emotionally disturbed women who do not fit in with their own values. She asked residents how they acquired their information about sexual feelings. Answers ranged from Playboy to the army. Few had read any parts of Masters and Johnson's classic on human sexual behaviour, and one resident said that he had not actually read them but had seen the authors on television. Interaction with patients is depersonalized and boundaries between doctor and patient are rarely crossed. Scully's life serves as a stark and powerful reminder of the emotional involvement. Some doctors whose wives were pregnant said they did not intend to be present at delivery because they did not want to identify their wives with their patients.

The caring aspect of healing is peripheral to a surgeon's training. American doctors learn caring skills only in private practice when they have to comfort patients, and are probably not at all if they work with clinic patients. Outside private practice women are seen as teaching material and residency programmes actually train doctors not to care. In childbirth, patients are those on whom students and residents practise techniques such as episiotomies, forceps extractions and Caesarean sections and suturing, and their deliveries are tailored to meet the needs of training.

In their first year of training residents used forceps for delivery more often than later on, since this was the special skill they wanted to learn at that time. As one put it: "I use them a lot to gain the experience of using them. There is almost no time when you can't use them, unless the woman delivers before you get the forceps on."

After this Scully found that residents completely lost interest in spontaneous vaginal deliveries since they did not think they learned anything from them, and in their final years they concentrated on gynaecological surgery. "I thought women should have surgery at some point in time, and if she wouldn't have surgery, I wouldn't have surgery either."

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now, it can be easy surgery . . . She won't have any more children, but she won't have any fibroids, and she won't have any potential for disease."

Scully discovered that many women were frightened into surgery by the use of the word "tumour" to describe the fibroids, which they took to mean cancer. Since the women were not informed of the risks of surgery, they often wanted to have other organs as well as "a preventive measure" and in this way a healthy appendix or ovaries might be removed. At one of the hospitals studied this got so frequent that such extra operations were ruled out except with the permission of the head of the department. Some gynaecologists recommend removal of both ovaries, too, and replacement with hormone therapy. Just in case it would be more rational, but it isn't. Since breast cancer is a good deal more common than cancer of the uterus, unfortunately, the use of sex hormones to take over the work of the excised ovaries increases the risk of breast cancer.

In her final chapter Scully looks at strategies for change. Criticizes the medical profession in the United States, obstetricians have almost completely eliminated competition from midwives, and conduct experiments in need of medical care who cannot afford to pay for proper services. She suggests the answer is in a caring and community-controlled National Health Service.

But much that she has to say is highly relevant to Britain too, chiefly her querying of the gynae-logic monopoly of the health care of women and their claim to exclusive medical access and control over the organs of female reproduction. She believes we ought to be challenging this, the medical mal-treatment of women and the moving away from it. In gynae-logic, male-dominated medicine, one in which women can participate fully, can judge the quality of care they are getting and have genuine choice, women have a responsibility to learn more about their bodies, take an active role in influencing health legislation and practice, and organize alternative services where necessary. This book makes it clear that it is not just a matter of a woman's rights but of her responsibility to create better health.

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